

# *Best Of* Tree Country

the external newsletter of the SC Forestry Commission

SUMMER 2023



South Carolina  
Forestry Commission



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## Best of Tree Country

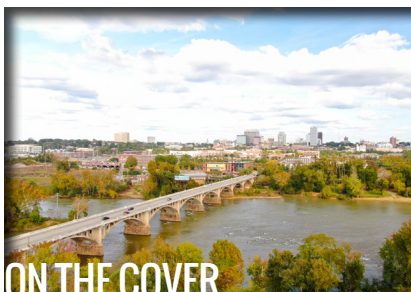
Best of Tree Country is published quarterly by the South Carolina Forestry Commission in the winter, spring, summer and fall.

The Commission is solely responsible for the content of this newsletter, but welcomes appropriate submissions from allied organizations, industry partners, consultant foresters, elected officials, landowners and private citizens.

Please contact SCFC Director of Communications Doug Wood at (803) 896-8820 or [dwood@scfc.gov](mailto:dwood@scfc.gov) to submit information, articles and/or photographs.

The Forestry Commission reserves the right to edit or exclude submissions based on its own editorial criteria.

South Carolina Forestry Commission  
5500 Broad River Road, Columbia SC 29212  
(803) 896-8800 | [www.scfc.gov](http://www.scfc.gov)



### ON THE COVER

The cover photo features the urban forest along the banks of the Congaree River in downtown Columbia.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### Success story - agency photo shoot

Forestry Commission personnel from around the state in nearly all job classifications participated in several photo shoots at agency headquarters.



### Success story - Wee Tee expansion recognition

The Forestry Commission celebrated partners who helped expand Wee Tee State Forest.



### New firefighting units

The agency displayed 14 new firefighting units during a photo shoot in July. The units were distributed in the field in mid-August.



### First basic dozer course

The Forestry Commission held its inaugural Basic Dozer Operator Course at Manchester State Forest May 15-19.



### Teachers' Tour

Twenty-seven teachers from across the state participated in the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour based out of Aiken.



# SCFC personnel show up in force for photo shoots



A host of agency employees from around the state in nearly all job classifications participated in a several photo shoots at the headquarters March 29, April 4 and April 20. Thirty-eight employees came to Columbia to represent their regions and positions for photos to be used for various purposes. The photos will promote the agency on social media, in publications, on the website and for life-sized cutout displays for each region.

Each employee was assigned what uniform to wear, what time to arrive and what props to bring. Photos were taken of every employee in front of a white backdrop, out in the woods and with a dozer.

A BIG THANK YOU goes to everyone who answered the call to come help promote the Forestry Commission and to Public Information Coordinator Michelle Johnson who coordinated all three events. These photos will be used for years to come.



Coastal Dispatcher Brittany Folk



Kershaw/Lee Sector Forestry Technician I  
Austin Huggins



Equipment Maintenance Manager  
Rufus Roberts



Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector  
Forestry Technician I Frank Nicholson



# SC PLT EE Centers now have three new “Tree Trunks”



Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley recently had the pleasure of upgrading Project Learning Tree (PLT) educational materials called “Tree Trunks” at seven PLT Environmental Education Centers around the state.

EE Center is a special designation for museums, parks, science centers and other education venues that have partnered with SC Project Learning Tree. Established in 2018, the SC PLT EE Center program has helped increase PLT’s outreach and visibility across the state.

When the program started, each center was outfitted with a single wooden trunk that contained materials for instructors to lead 10 activities from PLT’s Pre K-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide. These were originally only available to facilitators to help them lead PLT PD events.

PLT completed a major revision of the Pre K-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide in 2021, and the new Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide was released. As SC PLT implemented numerous trainings in this new and popular activity guide, there was a need for revisions to be made to the PLT Tree Trunks. In 2022, Beth

Foley received \$2,000 from the Rayonier Community Fund to go toward much-needed Tree Trunk revisions.

Foley is happy to report that all seven EE Centers now have three new PLT Tree Trunks, thanks to the Rayonier Community Fund, the charitable arm of the Rayonier global forest company, which provides sustainable forest management, land management, timber products, and real estate services. There is now a Trees & Me trunk, a K-8 trunk and a Secondary Ed trunk.

The Trees & Me trunk has materials to lead activities from the Trees & Me: Activities for Exploring Nature with Young Children activity guide, which is for ages 1-6. The K-8 trunk has activity supplies from the Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide. The Secondary trunk is geared towards



Each of the seven SC PLT Environmental Education Centers now has three new PLT Tree Trunks available for loan to PLT instructors.

middle and high school students and has resources for the Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests and the Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers activity guides. Each center now has materials to lead 32 different PLT activities! The old wooden trunks were replaced with lightweight rolling carts, which are much easier for educators to transport.

These educational kits are available to loan, free of charge, to anyone who has attended a PLT training. The seven EE centers host at least one PLT professional development (PD) event annually on site, which are often free and open-to-the-public, thanks to Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Education Grant funding.

Free educational kits are available at the centers to help increase educators’ implementation of PLT. PLT EE Centers have been a great initiative in our state to help promote collaborations that encourage long-term, high-quality, environment-focused educational programming.

More information on the SC PLT EE Center Program and Tree Trunks can be found at [www.scfc.gov/education/project-learning-tree/sc-plt-environmental-ed-centers/](http://www.scfc.gov/education/project-learning-tree/sc-plt-environmental-ed-centers/).





The Forestry Commission played host to its partners from the SC Conservation Bank, Open Space Institute and The Nature Conservancy at a special ceremony during the Aug. 3 commission meeting in Columbia to celebrate and thank them for their conservation efforts that recently added nearly 4,000 acres to Wee State Forest. Pictured from left to right are TNC Government Relations Manager Marjorie Cleary, TNC Executive Director Dale Threatt-Taylor, SC Conservation Bank Executive Director Raleigh West, OSI Vice President and Director of Land for the Southeast Dr. Maria Whitehead, State Forester Scott Phillips, SCFC Commissioner Eric Smith, SCFC Commission Chairman Walt McPhail, Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences Dean Dr. Keith Belli and SCFC Commissioner Mac Rhodes.

## SCFC celebrates partners who helped expand Wee Tee State Forest

After having to cancel two previously scheduled dedication ceremonies at Wee Tee State Forest because of inclement weather, the Forestry Commission finally had a chance to recognize and thank the conservation partners who helped the agency secure an additional 3,857 acres, including six new miles of riverfront, to its landholding in Williamsburg and Georgetown counties.

The expansion of Wee Tee State Forest was made possible with the addition of two tracts that adjoined the original southeast boundary of the state forest.

The Great Santee Swamp Tract and the Dawhoo Lake/Wadmacon Tract were purchased by Open Space Institute (OSI) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in December 2021 and eventually transferred to the Forestry Commission a year later.

This acquisition increases the size of Wee Tee State Forest by a third, allowing for expanded public access and contributing to a growing corridor of protected land in one of the largest river basins on the East Coast.

The acquisition of the new properties was made possible with multiple streams of funding, pooled by TNC and OSI, both of which worked with the SC Conservation Bank to

obtain the property at no cost to the Forestry Commission.

Funding sources included the SC Conservation Bank, two US Fish & Wildlife Service grants— a Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant and a North American Wetlands Conservation Grant — as well as the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation, the Top Family Foundation, and a host of private donors.

Wee Tee State Forest has always been a sportsman’s paradise, containing more than 16,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest with roughly 18 miles of frontage on the Santee River, where anglers and boaters visit eagerly from all around the state.

A 200-acre lake, numerous ponds and oxbows provide pristine fish and wildlife habitat. The new acreage at Wee Tee is now part of a regional patchwork of properties that TNC

calls the “Santee River Wilderness Corridor,” which spans almost 400,000 acres and includes state, federal and land trust conservation easement areas, including the US Forest Service’s Francis Marion National Forest and the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in Awendaw.

The Santee River Basin contains critical habitat, including a mix of freshwater marsh, tidal forested wetlands and upland mature pine-hardwoods, to shelter 116 priority wildlife species of conservation concern.

“These spell-bindingly beautiful properties will be added to the Santee River basin,” said OSI Vice President and Director of Land for the Southeast Dr. Maria Whitehead. “This momentous conservation win will protect water quality in the Santee River; secure habitat for rare and threatened species; and will mitigate



climate change by storing hundreds of tons of carbon.”

Wee Tee’s new footprint not only adds to the state forest system, which ensures that 25% of the forest’s gross income will continue to be shared with

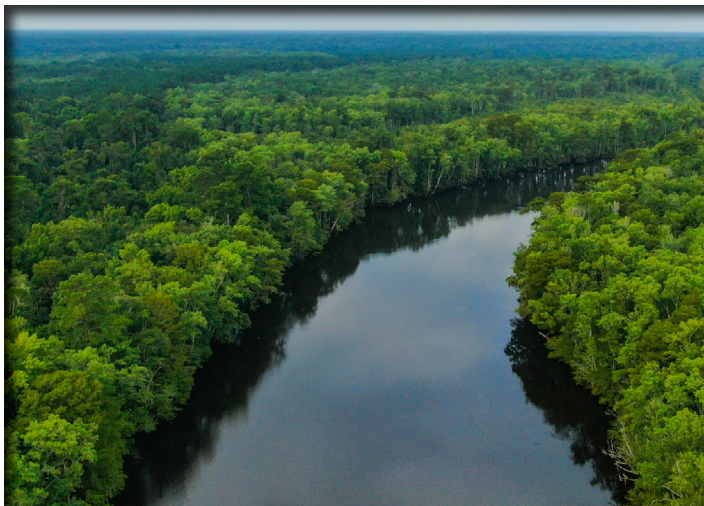
school districts in a new county, but it also enrolls the land into sustainable forest management for generations to come.

But Wee Tee State Forest’s expansion still isn’t complete. OSI, which has

procured an additional 2,248 acres of adjoining riverfront acreage from Resource Management Service (RMS), will be transferring the so-called RMS Wadmacon Tract to the Forestry Commission in the very near future.



Wee Tee State Forest’s new addition includes Dawhoo Lake, below left, an oxbow lake great for fishing and lush forested tracts that border the Santee River, below right. Wee Tee’s bottomlands and aquatic systems furnish excellent fish and wildlife habitat and provide the citizens of South Carolina numerous recreational opportunities. Though subject to periodic flooding, it is considered one of the most significant tracts of land in the Santee River floodplain.





# CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER



Retired Piedmont Regional Forester Mike Bozzo (right) receives an honorary lifetime membership in the SC State Firefighters' Association at the organization's annual Fire-Rescue conference in Myrtle Beach.

## Mike Bozzo: Honorary Lifetime Member SC State Firefighters' Association

Congratulations to retired Piedmont Regional Forester **Mike Bozzo**, who was awarded an honorary lifetime membership in the SC State Firefighters' Association at the organization's annual Fire-Rescue conference in Myrtle Beach.

For many years, the Forestry Commission's incident management team, for which Mike served as incident commander, assisted the SCSFA with behind-the-scenes planning, organization and logistics of the conference and other incidents from hurricane responses to the wildfires of Highway 31 and Pinnacle Mtn, to the heartfelt response in the Seeking of Neveah.

Mike said, "I was truly honored and surprised at this recognition. I feel like we have had this relationship since my very first days with the South Carolina Forestry Commission. For the past 40 years, fighting wildfires with such greats as at the time Chief Carter Jones in Clarendon County; our Forestry dozers have been plowing firebreaks in the woods while the Fire Service has been protecting homes in the

Wildland Urban Interface. This all took some cooperation and coordination in which training together and working together was crucial in our abilities to protect lives, homes and our natural resources."

He continued, "Through the years my relationship with the SC Firefighters involved not only fighting wildfires side-by-side but working with the Fire Departments throughout the state on increasing their firefighting capacity through the awarding of VFA grants and the federal excess program equipment."

## Doug Wood: SAF Outstanding Forestry Journalism Award

Congratulations to Forestry Commission Director of Communications **Doug Wood** on winning the 2023 Society of American Foresters Outstanding Forestry Journalism Award!

SAF presents this national award each year to an individual whose high-quality journalism increases the American public's understanding of forestry and natural resources. Under Wood's guidance, the Forestry Commission's communications division has won seven SC State Library Notable State Document awards and has produced multiple impactful PSA campaigns, including last year's Cancel Wildfires SC campaign featuring Clemson and South Carolina football coaches Dabo Swinney and Shane Beamer.

"While I'm humbled and honored to be nominated for this award, I share the recognition equally with our whole communications and education team and the greater community of foresters, wildland



Director of Communications Doug Wood will receive the SAF's Outstanding Forestry Journalism Award at SAF's national convention in Sacramento, Calif., in October.

firefighters and other natural resource professionals who inspire us every day to share the good news of forestry." Wood will be recognized at the SAF's national convention in Sacramento, Calif., in October.

## Scott Danskin: SAF SC Volunteer Service Award

Congratulations to Forest Resource Analyst **Scott Danskin** (far left) on winning the Society of American Foresters South Carolina Division's 2023 Volunteer Service Award. Scott was presented the award at the group's summer meeting in Clemson in early June.



Forest Resource Analyst Scott Danskin (far left) receives the SAF's South Carolina Division's 2023 Volunteer Service Award at the group's summer meeting in Clemson.



## Two Retirees Receive Lifetime Achievement for Excellence in Prescribed Fire Awards

Retirees Mike Bozzo and Terrell Smith received the Lifetime Achievement for Excellence in Prescribed Fire Award from the South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council.

This award is presented to an individual who has distinguished himself through a lifetime of contributions and dedication to the advancement of prescribed fire in South Carolina. The individual must have 10 or more years of experience as a prescribed fire practitioner, manager or advocate in South Carolina and must be retiring.

Piedmont Assistant Regional Forester Brad Bramlett nominated Bozzo for the award, he wrote:

*I have known Mike for over 28 years. My first real encounter working closely with him was in 1994. We were sent to Idaho on a handcrew to fight wildfires. Mike was the crew boss for the 20-person crew. He was responsible for crew operations and safety, did a great job and led us well. Mike has always been a great leader.*

*Fast-forward a few decades later and Mike is now the Piedmont Regional Forester in Newberry. Mike is ultimately in charge of all SC Forestry Commission personnel in the 19-county Piedmont Region. This region is the upper 1/3 of the state. Mike's leadership and passion for prescribed burning is reflected in how he manages. The Forestry Commission offers prescribed services to the public for a nominal fee. Even though prescribed burning is part of 'what we do', Mike takes it a step further. Mike encourages personnel to be proactive and safely burn "as often as they can". He is active in the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network, and gaining knowledge from their workshops, has encouraged fall burning (which is pretty much unheard of in our agency). Mike realizes that great burning*



Piedmont Assistant Regional Forester Brad Bramlett (left) and State Forester Scott Phillips (right) presented retiree Mike Bozzo with the award April 11.



(left to right) State Forester Scott Phillips, Margie Smith (Terrell's wife), son Alton, Terrell Smith, Coastal Regional Forester Calvin Bailey and Piedmont Regional Forester Pete Stuckey.

*days are becoming fewer so is looking for ways to 'open the window' more to increase prescribed burning.*

*Mike has also taken a novel approach by utilizing some 'friendly competition' between the various sectors in the region. The last few years, Mike has given personnel, in the sector who has completed the most prescribed burning, a small gift. This past year it was a nice flashlight.*

*Mike has a great working relationship with other partner agencies that allow seamless flow of information. Just a few*

*years ago, Mike reached out to the SC State Parks to offer assistance for prescribed burning on parks in the mountain region. Since that time, prescribed burning acreages have increased dramatically.*

*Mike's 39 years with the Forestry Commission will soon be coming to an end. He will be retiring October 1, 2022. Even though Mike will be leaving the agency in a few months, his legacy of leadership and love for prescribed burning will live on through those that come behind him. I want to personally thank Mike for his*



*tireless efforts and ask the committee to sincerely consider Mike for this prestigious award. Thank you in advance for your consideration.*

SPB Coordinator Tyler Greiner nominated Smith for the award. He wrote:

*I met Terrell in 2014 when I began my career with the SC Forestry Commission in Hampton County. Terrell began his career a bit earlier than me, in 1981 to be more specific. He and Pete Stuckey taught me everything I know about prescribed burning. Terrell has lit hundreds of prescribed burns and has responded to and fought over 1,000 wildfires.*

*He takes great pride in each prescribed burn and has a sense of relief knowing that the wildfire risk for that tract of land was greatly reduced that day.*

*Terrell has taught many employees in the commission about burning. Not everyone enjoys burning as much as I do, and Terrell understands this. Terrell is an on-the-job training kind of guy. He knows that no two burns are the same so he always lets the newest person get as much experience as safely possible.*

*I'm pretty sure Terrell knows every road and property gate in Hampton, Jasper, and Allendale counties and I have never seen him*

*use a GPS. He has great relationships with the landowners and discusses the process of each specific burn and the beneficial post-burn results. He is more than willing to help the landowner understand how we conduct the prescribed burns.*

*We have burned most all types of forest in the lowcountry, from the swampy jungles at Hamilton Ridge to the tall and open pines on Terrell's property. I don't think I've ever heard the words "Thank you" said by landowners to a person so many times, until I met Terrell. And one thing I will never forget: If Terrell's burning at 9:30, you better have your gear on and be ready to burn at 9:00 sharp.*

## International Society of Forest Resource Economics

Resource Development Director Tim Adams and Marketing Specialist John Barlow attended the annual meeting of the International Society of Forest Resource Economics in Houston, Texas May 15-17. This was a two-day event where most of the southern states were represented by university professors and/or state agency professionals. The focus of the meeting was trends and predictions for timber supply by state and forest markets during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.



Marketing Specialist John Barlow presents international trade data for South Carolina.

### RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

—John Barlow

There were presentations on various subjects including "Are consumers green enthusiasts or skeptics," "Mass timber market in the US South," "Where is all the timber going," and many ongoing studies at other universities.

The SC Forestry Commission is a participant in the grant titled "Where is all the timber going," which Tim and John were in attendance to present at

the meeting. John's presentation focused on international trade data for SC, showing where exports go once leaving the state.

Tim and John also participated in two tours that were part of the event:

1. A dormitory at Rice University featuring mass timber construction. The goal of this project was to make the exterior of the building match with other buildings on campus. Mass timber is in view in the interior of the building and is a focal point.

2. Urban forestry at Houston Arboretum and Nature Center. This



The mass timber dorm at Rice University.

was in down-town Houston so, even though you felt like you were in a rural area, except for the traffic noise, you were actually on a tiny patch of land in between interstates and roads where local nature is a focus.



# Forestry Commission Marketing Program Hosts India Inbound Trade Mission

The Marketing program hosted a delegation from India April 24 – April 26 in Charleston. The India delegation consisted of three companies that desire to purchase South Carolina logs or lumber. The companies represented were the Mahajan Group, Balaji Wood, and VG Lumber. Karnavati Group is a fourth company that was scheduled to be in attendance. Karnavati Group had visa issues and was unable to attend but plans to make a separate trip to the state beginning April 30.

Forest Resource Development Director Tim Adams and Marketing Specialist John Barlow hosted the delegation for the Forestry Commission. They had a lot of help from Carla Edwards and Ray Davidson, both with the SC Department of Commerce, and Saurabh Khanna, a consultant for SC Department of Commerce.

## MARKETING

—John Barlow

The three-day event began with presentations to the delegation from the Department of Commerce, Economic Development, Marketing, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The goal of the presentations was to introduce the delegation to South Carolina, our products, sellers and what is required to export raw materials from South Carolina to India. The delegation enjoyed the presentations, which produced many questions and great discussion.

The group toured the Port of Charleston, which highlighted the complicated logistics involved in



The entire group at the Port of Charleston preparing for the tour.



Marketing Specialist John Barlow presents for SC Marketing.



Forest Resource Development Director Tim Adams gives his presentation on Monday.

loading and removing shipping containers from ships in an orderly and safe fashion. The Port of Charleston consists of three separate dock locations where different-sized ships are sent for loading and unloading. There is constant movement of containers, equipment and people with the end goal of getting a ship turned around in 24 hours.

Tuesday consisted of business-to-business meetings with three SC companies: WL Timbers and International Wood Group, both export yards for logs, and Warren and Griffin Sawmill, a small pine sawmill out of Williams, SC. Each of the Indian companies had meetings with each of the SC companies. Although no deals were completed, there will be

ongoing discussions that may turn into export business for the SC companies in the future.

Wednesday was a tour of International Wood Group, one of the SC companies the delegation met and had discussions with on Tuesday. Everyone enjoyed the tour, and there was much discussion around the process and cost of exporting logs to India. Even after the official trade mission ended mid-morning, two of the companies from India drove around in the lowcountry to see some of the many mills and yards in the area.

We plan to do more of these in the future in hopes of expanding exports of SC products to more places on the globe.





## 14 New Firefighting Units Ready to Roll Out Across the State

We have 14 new firefighting units that were distributed to the field in mid-August. These are Kenworth T880 transports and Caterpillar D2 dozers. Three of the units have Fesco RM1000 lift plows with front-mounted winches, and the other 11 have rear-mounted winches. The Piedmont Region will be receiving five units, Pee Dee will be getting four and Coastal will be getting five. The total price of a unit ranges from \$394,300 for the rear-winch model to \$411,549 for the lift plow/front winch model.

The Kenworth Truck Company requested some photos of the units to use in their calendar, so a photo shoot was lined up on Harbison State Forest at the River Field July 26. Equipment Coordinator Doug Mills coordinated the effort and got the units to the location cleanly with the help of Jonathan Calore, Russell Hubright, David Owen, Brad Phillips, Phillip Reddick and Brian Moran either taking or returning the units in the triple digit heat index. Brad Phillips also gets a big THANK YOU for cutting the grass at the River Field and making it look great.



Firefighting units consist of a transport, bulldozer and plow.



# First Basic Dozer Operator Course Held at Manchester

The Forestry Commission held its inaugural Basic Dozer Operator Course at Manchester State Forest May 15-19. The course, designed by an established Dozer Training Core Group using personal field experience and research from Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Mississippi, and the Geographic Area Equipment Academy, was led by Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt. Two classes completed the course during the week, each lasting three days. Nineteen forestry technicians and two FMOs attended the training. It provided quality hands-on training for students to increase their knowledge of the maintenance, safety and capabilities of SCFC dozers.

Classroom portions were taught before students got their hands on equipment and learn from experienced operators what to do and not do. Safety, maintenance, basic dozer operation and how to do in-woods repairs were also covered. Instructors also held a Medical Incident Report exercise as well as a Code Red exercise with dispatch managers as participants. A Medical Incident Report, also known as an 8-line exercise because of the eight-item checklist it covers, refers to a situation in which there is a medical incident within the larger incident to which personnel are responding. A Code Red exercise, which also includes an 8-line exercise, refers to when someone on the incident is seriously or fatally injured, and all radio communications cease except for those relating to the emergency.

Students sat in the enclosed-cab dozer to be familiar with how to open a side window and the location of an emergency hammer in case of an emergency exit following a rollover. The last day-and-a half for each class



Station 2 instructors Piedmont Forestry Center Manager Chris McCorkle (left) and Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector FMO Colton Webb (right) explain to the students about the plowing and blading exercise.



The first group of class graduates with their certificates May 17.

was spent at three stations that featured obstacles and operation, blading and plowing, and winches and recovery.

Station 1 was led by Anderson/Oconee Sector Forestry Technician I John McGee, Dorchester/Lower Charleston Sector FMO Ron Clark and Cherokee/Chester/York Sector FMO Matt Gordon. Students became familiar with the operating equipment before maneuvering the dozers around an obstacle course with logs, stumps, trees, ditches, slope and inclines. Students also loaded and unloaded a dozer onto an transport.

Station 2, taught by Piedmont Forestry Center Manager Chris McCorkle, Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector FMO Colton Webb and Clarendon/Sumter Sector Forestry Technician I Billy Green, discussed the awareness of powerlines, gas lines, fiber optic cables,

septic lines and tanks and guy wires. Students were shown how to cover a stump and push snags and burning debris “into the black.” Then students operated dozers with plows and blades at different depths and speeds. Students had to right a turned-over plow and operate dozers different than their own.

At Station 3, led by Georgetown Sector Forestry Technicians Wayne Smith and Brad Jones and Clarendon/Sumter Sector Forestry Technician I Eric Brown, students worked with winch cables and learned the best way to wrap a chain around a tree to anchor and pull themselves out of a bog, as well as how to use a blade and chain to get out of a bog.

The class was a great success, with students receiving valuable information and lessons learned from some of our agency’s experienced operators.





Timmy Rainbolt and Cookie Manos walking around during a home assessment.

# Wildfire Community Preparedness Day Events Held Around the State

In the world of wildfire prevention, the first Saturday in May is Wildfire Community Preparedness Day. This campaign, led by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), has been very successful for many years, encouraging communities and residents to have a single work day every year devoted to wildfire mitigation projects.

It is important that we work with communities to help them plan and execute projects that will reduce their risk of wildfires. Over the past few years, we have assisted communities with several different types of projects and events, and this year followed that trend. This Wildfire Preparedness Day was a great success with events in Horry County, Hilton Head and Oconee



County, and I would like to thank all of our personnel and cooperators for participating.

In Horry County, we worked with Waterford Plantation in the Carolina Forest area for a Wildfire Preparedness Day. Waterford has been a Firewise USA community since 2013. We also worked with

Horry County Fire Rescue (HCFR) for this event. For this project, we set up a tent to talk to the community members about their risks and ways to mitigate those risks. We also completed some individual home assessments, which are very useful to homeowners because we show them the vulnerable areas around their homes that may allow fire to damage their property. This was a very successful project for Horry County, and we had very good participation from our agency and cooperators. Special thanks to the Waterford community for participating, to Cookie Manos, Chairperson for Waterford Plantation's Firewise Committee, Firewise Committee member Ed LaGuardia, HCFR Wildfire Coordinator Tim Rainbolt,



and HCFR firefighter Richard Green and Dillon/Florence Sector Forestry Technician I Will Atkinson for attending and assisting with the event.

## Coastal Region

Coastal Firewise Coordinator Andy Johnson worked with a few different communities for Wildfire Community Preparedness Day. Long Cove Club on Hilton Head Island has been working toward becoming the state's next Firewise USA community. Andy assisted community leaders in performing home assessments and offered guidance to them for the best way to defend their investments from wildfires. After many meetings and calls, Long Cove became a Firewise USA Community in May 2023. This marks the first Firewise USA Community on Hilton Head Island and the fifth in the Coastal Region. We look forward to a long and prosperous partnership with Long Cove Club. Andy would like to thank Coastal Regional Forester Calvin Bailey for assisting with this effort.

Andy also worked with fire department personnel from two Aiken County departments, and they



Keowee Harbours residents make piles of debris.

performed 11 home assessments in two different communities in Aiken County May 6. Both of these communities are positioned right beside undeveloped lands with no organizational structure for sustained fire prevention or fuel mitigation. In the future, we will work with each of them to adopt Firewise USA standards.

On Earth day, Andy and Aiken/Barnwell Sector Forestry Technicians Randy Hill and Russell Hale staffed

a booth in downtown Aiken. The event, which hadn't been held since the Covid-19 pandemic, was well attended.

## Keowee Harbours

Firewise USA Community Keowee Harbours participated in a fuels reduction project in one of the communities' common areas May 6, Wildfire Community Preparedness Day.

The project in Oconee County was planned by the Community Firewise Coordinator Mike Sampongna and his Firewise committee. The Keowee Harbours residents turned out in force with 26 participants removing more than 50 cubic yards of vegetation, which included ground fuels and ladder fuels. Besides the vegetation removal, Upstate Firewise/Prevention Coordinator Chris Revels provided participants with a quick lesson on hazard fuels reduction with a focus on defensible space. Congratulations to Keowee Harbours for a great event!



Aiken/Barnwell Sector Forestry Technician I Randy Hill mans the wildfire prevention exhibit.



# First Entry Burn on Kings Mountain State Park

After two years of trying to get a burning window due to a very restrictive burn prescription (wind direction), Kings Mountain State Park finally has fire on the ground. Staff from Kings Mountain National Military Park, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Forestry Commission personnel from the Cherokee/Chester/York Sector conducted a prescribed burn between the Love Valley community and the state park's primary visitor facilities April 25.



(left to right) Cherokee/Chester/York Sector Forestry Technician I Lamar Batchelor, Piedmont East Unit Forester Jeff Riggan and Cherokee/Chester/York Sector FMO Matt Gordon work with a TNC crew on the prescribed burn April 25.

## FIREWISE

—Chris Revels

This Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) burn will reduce hazard fuels in a high-use visitor area that

borders the Love Valley community. Reducing the hazard fuels in this area are critical for protection of the community, recreational facilities, and the cultural resources that

were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. Upstate WUI Coordinator, Chris Revels served as the Burn Boss for this 105-acre prescribed burn.

## Price Increases for Firebreak Plowing, Waterbars, Prescribed Burning, Standby

The commissioners approved an increase in service rates for FY24. Increases are occurring for firebreaks and waterbars (medium and large tractor), and for understory prescribed burning. The standby rate is now standardized like the rest, with the first hour being the minimum charge.

Below is a summary of the changes for FY24:

### **Firebreak plowing / waterbar construction**

Medium tractor duty: \$165\* for first hour, per tractor / \$130 each extra hour, per tractor (\$165 minimum)

Large tractor duty: \$185\* for first hour, per tractor / \$145 each extra hour, per tractor (\$185 minimum)

\* Includes mileage charge for each unit per day.

### **Prescribed burning**

\$30/acre for understory burning (firebreak plowing not included)

\$35/acre for understory burning in mountainous terrain and site preparation burning (firebreak plowing not included)

**\* \$500 minimum for all prescribed burning services**

### **Prescribed burning standby service**

\$125\* for first hour

\$45 for each additional hour

\*\$125 minimum / includes mileage charge for each unit per day (landowner is responsible for fire and must follow an SCFC-approved burning plan)

To view the SCFC's equipment and services catalog for 2023-2024, please visit <https://www.scfc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Services-2024.pdf>.

## MANAGEMENT

—Chisalm Beckham





# Three Graduate from Criminal Justice Academy

Lynches River Assistant Unit Forester Brandon Smith and Black River Assistant Unit Forester Tonya Smith graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in July. Brandon graduated and was sworn in as a Forestry Commission law enforcement officer July 14. Tonya graduated and was sworn in

July 28. Congratulations, Brandon and Tonya!

Beaufort/Jasper Sector FMO Scotty Harrington graduated from the Criminal Justice Academy January 6 and was sworn in as an SCFC Law Enforcement Officer January 9.

Congratulations, Scotty!



SCFC officers support Brandon at his graduation: (left to right) Coastal Investigator Danny Collins, Lynches River Unit Forester Kenny Robertson, Manchester State Forest LE Technician Steve Ward, Brandon, Darlington/Marlboro Sector FMO Shawn Feldner, Chesterfield/Lancaster Sector FMO Glen Lampley, Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector FMO Colton Webb and LE Chief Tommy Mills.



Employees came to support Tonya at her graduation: (right to left) Williamsburg Sector Forestry Technician I Jackie Welch, Manchester State Forest LE Technician Steve Ward, Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt, Coastal Investigator Danny Collins, Georgetown Sector Forestry Technician I (and husband) Wayne Smith, Tonya, Pee Dee Investigator Winn McCaskill, Protection Chief Darryl Jones, LE Chief Tommy Mills and Assistant LE Chief Jonathan Calore.



(left to right) State Forester Scott Phillips, Piedmont Regional Forester Pete Stuckey, MSF LE Technician Steve Ward, Beaufort/Jasper Sector FMO Scotty Harrington, Law Enforcement Chief Tommy Mills, Coastal Investigator Danny Collins, Edisto Unit Forester Kip Terry, Pee Dee Investigator Winn McCaskill, Coastal Regional Forester Calvin Bailey, Edisto Assistant Unit Forester Drew Pressley and Spartanburg/Union Sector FMO Clay Howard attended Scotty's graduation in January.





Soldiers head for cover after landing.

## U.S. Marines Hold Exercise on Manchester State Forest

Manchester State Forest (MSF) hosted the Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Unit Training Exercise April 19-26 featuring many operations going on during the week. The exercise took months of planning with several local agencies involved.

Over the past eight months Manchester State Forest (MSF) personnel, along with local law enforcement, fire and SCDHEC officials, have worked with the Marine Expeditionary Operations Training Group to plan an exercise for the Marines. The training group was interested in Manchester, specifically the Camp Burnt Gin area, because performing an exercise in an area with unknowns (barking dogs, near constant use by the public, etc.) makes the exercise more “real world.” While there were many pre-event meetings to plan the activities, plans changed considerably as the event was in motion. Jason Bettis, one of the event’s coordinators, said his job is to create the problem, not the solution.

### MANCHESTER STATE FOREST

—Ben Kendall

During the exercise week many operations took place, including recovering a downed pilot from a tree



Three Osprey tilt-wing aircraft assist in the insertion of marines (above and below).

and rappelling onto a tower in Sumter. A big part of the exercise revolved around planning a raid on an “enemy” location. Camp Burnt Gin served as this target. A five-marine reconnaissance team jumped onto Manchester to surveil the camp, all the while hiding from the “enemy” and the Wedgefield locals.

After five days of hide-and-seek, a raid force was inserted, using three Osprey tilt-wing aircraft as well as Huey and Apache attack helicopters for air support. For the next few hours, helicopters buzzed just over the treetops supporting the raid. The Marines were extracted well after dark from a small activity field at Camp Burnt Gin, where the Ospreys were forced to land one at a time. Bettis said it was pretty rare to see three Ospreys land together like they did at Manchester.

Through flexibility from all the local partners the event was successful and



Marines parachute on Manchester grounds.

the Marines may want to come “play” again. I would like to thank State lands Coordinator James Douglas, MSF Law Enforcement Technician Steve Ward, and MSF Assistant Director John Bryan for helping make the event a valuable training opportunity for the II Marine Expeditionary Force. The coordinators stated that Manchester was a “superb training venue for the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.”



# Thinning on Harbison State Forest Completed

Harbison State Forest was closed to visitors periodically during June for a selective harvest of 47 acres behind the headquarters' office and around the Environmental Education Center.



A skidder brings cut trees to the logging deck.



The feller-buncher cuts trees and lays them down for the skidder.



The area behind the headquarters after the thinning.



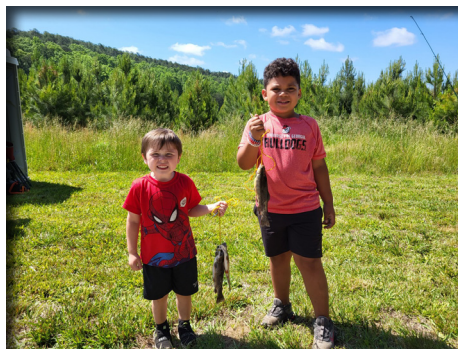
Trees are delimbed and topped to prepare the logs for loading on trucks.

## Piedmont Forestry Center Hosts Youth Fishing Rodeo

The Piedmont Forestry Center (PFC) hosted the annual Piedmont Youth Fishing Rodeo May 13 in cooperation with the SC Department of Natural Resources. Several hundred children participated in the outdoor even, and over 600 were in attendance.

Youth fishing rodeos are for children ages 5-15 years old and are a great community event that gives youth the opportunity to catch fish.

Sponsors of the event were Duke Energy, Chick-Fil-A, Ingles and Academy Sports. Academy Sports



All of the children were excited when they caught a fish.

provided gift cards for prizes. Duke Energy supplied the Porta Johns and tents. They also assisted with preparing

the area by cutting the grass and creek banks. Ingles provided ice cream. Walmart provided drinks and chips, and Chick-fil-A provided sandwiches.

**PIEDMONT FORESTRY CENTER**

*—Chris McCorkle*

A big THANK YOU goes to Anderson/Oconee Sector Forestry Technicians Nathan Gambrell, Randy Lyles and James Robbins for helping PFC Manager Chris McCorkle with the event.



# The Beauty of Niederhof Forestry Center

Niederhof Forestry Center, located in Jasper County on Highway 321, is a 1,593-acre tract of land named for Cam Niederhof, a former commissioner who served for 24 years.

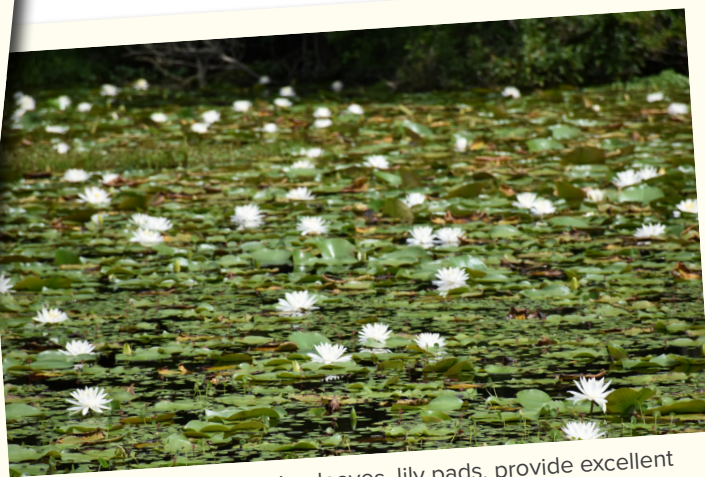
Currently the Forestry Commission manages the property for multiple uses, including tree improvement related activities, loblolly and longleaf pine seed orchards, progeny tests and demonstration plantings,

timber production, wildlife food plots and special outreach hunts.

In addition to the planted pines, progeny tests and seed orchards, there are two ponds that are habitat for fish, water fowl and alligators along with many other aquatic species. Whitetail deer, Eastern wild turkeys, coyotes, bobcats and several species of squirrels populate the property.



One of the many planted stands of loblolly pine on NFC.



Water lilies with their floating leaves, lily pads, provide excellent surface coverage for ponds protecting the fish from predators, providing them shade, and helping keep the temperature of the water more consistent. Additionally, their flowers attract pollinators such as bees.



A foot-long baby American Alligator lies in shallow water under the shade of an oak tree at the second pond near the longleaf orchard.



A Common Gallinule forages as it walks across the lily pads on a NFC pond.



# Statewide Green Infrastructure Plan Published

The SC Forestry Commission Urban and Community Forestry Program has completed the SC Statewide Green Infrastructure Strategy and Mapping project with partner Green Infrastructure Center (GIC). After a year of meeting with local and regional entities across the ten council of governments (COGs), counties, cities, and other statewide groups, GIC has released the data for the SC Statewide Green infrastructure Plan for public viewing on an ArcGIS Hub site. The ArcGIS Hub site is interactive, so a user can use online tools to view maps and do a series of analysis.



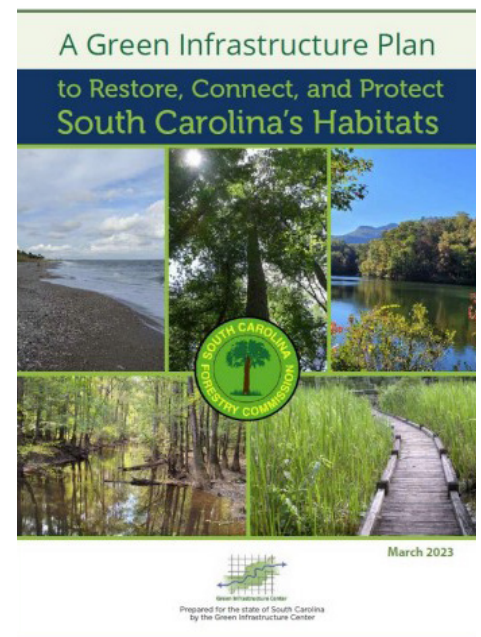
## URBAN FORESTRY —Cara Specht

The SC Statewide Green Infrastructure Plan has been published and includes:

- **Key findings**—such as 55% of the land area of SC is habitat cores, and 33% of habitat cores support cultural or recreational assets.
- **Methodology and maps**—there were over 40 workshops total, meeting with local stakeholders (COGS, cities, counties, and other local groups) and then two workshops with state-level stakeholder engagement (state agencies and nonprofit organizations).
- **Recommendations to mitigating risks**—sea level rise, storm surge, development, utility scale solar invasive species, pests and disease, water quality impairments, wildfires and fragmentation.

- **Implementation strategies** from 16 agencies to describe how they plan to utilize the statewide habitat cores and corridors map to further agency missions. For example, one strategy discussed by the SC Forestry Commission is to utilize the information to emphasize the agency's Fire/Firewise work-habitat cores/connectivity along with water quality, etc.
- **Several examples** of Regional COG strategies for protecting and restoring a connected landscape.

Each COG has its own dedicated report to view priority areas, implementation strategies, and several maps that look at assets—habitat cores (forested areas), agriculture, water, recreation, culture, and maps that show the risks—development, solar development, and water quality



The cover of the newly published GIC plan.

impairments.

All publications and the ArcGIS Hub site can be found on our website at:

<https://www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/sc-green-infrastructure-plan-2023/>





Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator Frances Waite presents the Green Infrastructure Project to attendees.

## Managing Trees in the Urban Environment

An urban workshop titled Managing Trees in the Urban Environment was held at the University Center of Greenville June 2. Representatives from Clemson Extension, the SC Forestry Commission, the SC Department of Transportation, and the City of Clemson made presentations on tree health and hazard tree assessment and proper tree planting and maintenance. The state's strategic green infrastructure plan and mapping project, right-of-way vegetation management, development of tree management plans for rapidly growing municipalities and chainsaw safety were also discussed.

Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator Frances Waite

provided an overview of the SC Statewide GI Strategy and Mapping project, which is an important resource for our state's planners, stakeholders and decision makers as we look into the future of South Carolina's land development. Threats and strategies for addressing land planning were addressed. The

project map and plans can be found at the following link: <https://www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/sc-green-infrastructure-plan-2023/>.

### URBAN FORESTRY

—Frances Waite

## Coastal Tree City/Campus USA Visits



Left: The Town of Summerville is celebrating 42 years of being a Tree City USA. Cara presented their flag to Director of Planning Jessi Shuler and Nick Wilson, the town's new Certified Arborist. Center: Coastal Urban Forester Cara Specht (right) presented MUSC Arborist and Assistant Grounds Manager Andrew Hargett their Tree Campus recognition April 20. MUSC held its Earth Day Event April 20 and promoted the campus' 11th year as a Tree Campus USA. Right: Public Services Asset Coordinator John Jury (left), Cara Specht and Director of Public Services Derrick Coaxum (far right) hold up the Town of Bluffton's new flag commemorating 12 years as a Tree City USA in front of the live oak planted during their 2021 Arbor Day event at Oscar Frazier Park in honor of David Waugh, late chairman of the Town Beautification Committee.



# Niederhof Forestry Center Hosts Pair of Turkey Hunts



Hunt participants and staff gather around Alex Cornelius with his first Eastern turkey.

Niederhof Forestry Center hosted the annual NWTF/SCFC Military Appreciation Turkey Hunt March 30-31. Three hunters participated in the hunt which harvested one turkey. Georgia NWTF member Alex Cornelius purchased the hunt at the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) National Convention in 2023 and two South Carolina National Guardsmen joined him to hunt on the 1600 acres at Niederhof.

The Forestry Commission provided the three guides (State Forester Scott Phillips, Piedmont Regional Forester Pete Stuckey and Edisto Unit Forester Kip Terry) and the NWTF provided the food. After introductions, orientation and hunt guidelines Thursday afternoon, the hunters patterned their guns on the range. A safety briefing was given, guides were drawn and the hunters and their

guides left for the afternoon hunt.

Thursday afternoon a few hens were seen but nothing was harvested. Friday morning Alex Cornelius, a blueberry farmer, harvested his first eastern turkey with Kip Terry. Alex said, "It was awesome. We got to see a show for an hour. It was amazing...a beautiful

morning!"

State Forester Scott Phillips presented the two SC National Guard soldiers, Hayden Bulwinkle and Austin Johnson, with challenge coins for their service to our country. Everyone enjoyed the fun, fellowship, food and time outdoors.



Austin Johnson gets ready to pattern his gun on the range.



## NWTF/SCFC Women in the Outdoors Turkey Hunt at NFC

The Forestry Commission and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) sponsored a Women in the Outdoors (WITO) turkey hunt at Niederhof Forestry Center (NFC) April 24-25 with two hunters participating. No gobblers were harvested by the first-time hunters but they did see hens and are looking forward to hunting again.

Both hunters were staff of the NWTF, had never killed a turkey before and never been hunting before. One had never shot any kind of gun except a water gun with her grandchildren. This special hunt gives personnel of the NWTF and SCFC who have never hunted the chance to experience a hunt and learn about the art of turkey hunting while helping manage the turkey population at NFC.

While they didn't see any gobblers, both ladies saw other wildlife, learned a lot and had fun over the two days. They both appreciated the beautiful calm of Niederhof Forestry Center.



Cindi Omar and Elisa Daly enjoyed their time at the hunt even though they didn't see any gobblers.



Hunt participants enjoyed the fellowship outdoors.

## Midlands Master Naturalists Visit Harbison

Twenty Midlands Master Naturalists visited Harbison State Forest (HSF) April 7 to learn about forestry. The Midlands Master Naturalist (MMN) course is part of a statewide Master Naturalist Program coordinated by Clemson University. The MMN course is hosted by the SC Wildlife Federation and taught by experts in the fields of natural history, botany,

biology, forestry and geology.

The SC Forestry Commission has for many years

taught the forestry portion of the course.

Coastal Stewardship Forester Vaughan Spearman and Forest Health Coordinator David Jenkins instructed the naturalists at the HSF training. Spearman led a hike to look at different management methods used in the forest, discussed the balance of forestry and wildlife management, explored the history



Forest Health Coordinator David Jenkins shows naturalists beetle galleries in the bark of a snag.

and planting efforts of longleaf pine, as well as many other aspects of forestry. Jenkins continued the hike to find evidence of insects and disease, discussed invasive species and proper management methods to protect our forest health.

Eight education staff from Camp Leopold also attended the program to brush up on their forest ecology knowledge. Participants learned a lot, had tons of great questions, and gave many compliments to the instructors.

### EDUCATION

—Beth Foley





PABC CEO Ronnie Summers, along with PABC summer intern Lacy Johnson, right, presented three checks to SCFC Director of Communications Doug Wood and State Forester Scott Phillips, left.

## PABC Donates \$9,000 to Education Programs

The Palmetto Agribusiness Council (PABC) made three \$3,000 donations totaling \$9,000 to allied forestry education programs administered jointly by the Forestry Association of South Carolina (FASC) and the South Carolina Forestry Commission.



Summers presented FASC President and CEO Cam Crawford their portion of the monies.

Learning Tree to support the forestry-focused environmental educational programming they provide to teachers and students alike.

PABC CEO Ronnie Summers presented checks to the Forestry Commission July 11 at the Columbia headquarters and later presented FASC President and CEO Cam Crawford their checks at their office in Columbia.

Many thanks to Palmetto Agribusiness Council!

**EDUCATION**  
—Beth Foley

The PABC Board made these incredible gifts to the SC Sustainable

Forestry Teachers' Tour, the Wood Magic Forest Fair and SC Project

## Wood Magic Forest Fair Dates Set for the Fall

The dates for this year's Wood Magic Forest Fair have been set:

**Piedmont Forestry Center (Tamassee) - October 3-6, 2023**

**Harbison State Forest (Columbia) - October 23-27, 2023**

**Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center (Georgetown) - November 14-17, 2023**

Applications are now open for the 2023 Wood Magic! The program has moved back to the 4th grade.

So we are now advertising to a new group of teachers and we would love your help with outreach. If

you have a child or grandchild who will be in the 4th grade next year and would like them to experience

Wood Magic, please share the 2023 WMFF application directly with his/her teacher. Or if you know a teacher who would be interested in the program, please share it with them. Applications are assessed on a first come, first accepted basis. With that in

mind, be sure to tell teachers to return an application quickly for the best chance of being accepted. Please have them check out the WMFF website for more details: [scfc.gov/education/wood-magic/](https://scfc.gov/education/wood-magic/)





# Pine Grove Elementary Holds Math, Science Day

Each year Pine Grove Elementary School in Columbia (right down the road from Harbison State Forest) hosts an experiential event where students learn how math and science knowledge and skills are used in various careers. Professionals from various government agencies, organizations and local businesses teach kids how they use math and science in their jobs. Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel was one of many professionals from the natural resource conservation/environmental science field who was able to talk with and do activities with the third-, fourth- and fifth- graders.

Students learned about necessary growth requirements for trees and how growth requirements affect a tree's health and rate of growth by analyzing the growth rings of sample cross-sections of loblolly pine tree stumps (aka, tree cookies) from different sites. Students also used diameter tapes to measure their tree cookies and then compared measurements to better understand the relationship between growth rates and growth requirements.

Matt showed the students how an increment borer can be used to find the age and growth history of a loblolly pine on the school campus. Each student got to use the borer, and the teachers did too. Students discovered that the trees they studied on the edge of campus had suppressed growth until the school was built in 1998. Prior to 1998, their studied trees were growing in a dense forest until it was cleared for the construction of the school. The remaining tree line around



Matt demonstrates how to use an increment borer.

the construction zone on the edge of campus then didn't have to compete as hard for growth

requirements which meant their growth rate increased. Evidence for this was seen by analyzing the spacing of the growth rings of the wood cores!

**EDUCATION**  
—Matt Schnabel

# High Hills Elementary Earth Day and Career Fair

Clarendon/Sumter Sector Forestry Technician I Jordan Barnette represented the Forestry Commission at High Hills Elementary School's Earth Day and Career Fair March 21. More than 400 fourth- and fifth-grade students visited the different stations in groups from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event was sponsored by the Shaw Air Force Base (AFB) 20th Civil Engineering Squadron. Some of the agencies attending were Shaw AFB Fire Department, Sumter Sherrif's Department, SC Department of Natural Resources, Sumter Fire Department, natural resources personnel from Shaw's bombing range, SCDHEC, and Continental Tire.

Jordan talked with the students about what we do, how we protect the forest and wildlife as wildland firefighters and answered questions about what a career as a wildland



With teacher supervision, children posed with the dozer.

firefighter was like. He explained how we use the bulldozer to create firebreaks to stop a wildfire by removing one of the elements of the fire triangle. Jordan showed the students his tractor plow unit and transport and some of the hand tools we use.





The first-place team from the SC Governor's School with Hunter Morton.

## SC FFA Members Compete at Forestry Competition



Students measure the height of a tree.



A student identifies a tree species by its leaves.

High school students from across the state descended on the Piedmont Forestry Center Saturday, May 6 to test their forestry knowledge and skills at the SC Future Farmers of America (FFA) Forestry Competition. Nine FFA chapters sent teams that competed against each other at four skills stations (tree measurements/timber cruising for volume tons; tree identification; chain saw part identification, troubleshooting and safety; and topographic map interpretation) and in the general knowledge written exam.

The competition was set up by Environmental Education Assistant Coordinator Beth Foley and Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel and run in partnership with SC Future Farmers of America CDE Coordinator Jason Gore.

The winning team from the SC Governor's School for Agriculture will represent South Carolina FFA at the national competition this summer. Good luck!

### EDUCATION

—Matt Schnabel

### Participating Teams and Advisor

- 1<sup>st</sup> - The SC Governor's School for Agriculture – Hunter Morton
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Fort Mill High School – Tim Pasour
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Conway High School – Kristin Jacobs
- Gilbert High School – Derrick Cooper
- Lexington One Technology Center – Scott Tager
- Clover High School – Shalyn Wehbie
- Woodmont High School – Ryan Gambrell
- Mauldin High School – Holden Epperly
- Lexington Richland 5 Center for Advanced Technical Studies – Sim Asbill

### Overall Individual Winners:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Trip Steigerwald, The SC Governor's School for Agriculture
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Emily Rodman, The SC Governor's School for Agriculture
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Ella Taylor, The SC Governor's School for Agriculture



# Harbison State Forest's Chronolog Project

Harbison State Forest is excited about a new citizen science project called [Chronolog](#). Using their cell phones, forest visitors can capture an image of the surrounding environment at the Chronolog site and e-mail that image to Chronolog. Chronolog stitches together each image to create a time lapse showing environmental change. The time lapse will provide photographic evidence of how the forest changes over time.

[HSF's Chronolog citizen science project](#) engages visitors in the documentation of natural and human-caused changes at one forested stand along the Firebreak Trail near the Environmental Education Center.

"Stands are recognizable areas of a forest that are relatively uniform in species composition, physical characteristics or condition. Stands are generally managed as a single

unit, and they exhibit unique features that separate them from adjacent stands" (Univ of TN Extension). The management objective of this forested stand is to create a healthy, uneven-age longleaf stand.

Like all the state forests, Harbison is a working forest actively managed for multiple uses like wildlife enhancement, soil and water conservation, timber, research, aesthetic beauty, recreation and education.

Although Harbison's primary emphasis is on providing an educational and recreational greenspace, it's also used to demonstrate the value of various forestry practices, from prescribed burning to harvesting, site preparation and planting. The next time you visit Harbison State Forest, check out our Chronolog site on the Firebreak Trail!



Assistance Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley takes a photo on the Firebreak Trail for the Chronolog site.

## EDUCATION

—Matt Schnabel

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# SC State Summer Camp Staff Receive PLT Training

This summer, 8-to-12-year olds from around the state will be attending “Explorer Camps” at various locations across the state where they will be learning and doing activities about farming, ranching, wildlife management and forestry. Agriculture agents with the 1890 Extension Program at SC State University plan and coordinate the camps and students at SC State University are the camp counselors. The counselors will be using many Project Learning Tree (PLT) activities with their children during the camps so they can spend time in forests and learn about forest conservation, careers in forestry, and the environmental, economic, and societal benefits of our forests.

A PLT professional development event was conducted for the 28 agriculture agents and counselors May 22 at



Counselors estimate tree height in the PLT activity Nature’s Skyscrapers.

the Orangeburg County Extension office. It was led by Orangeburg Conservation District Education Coordinator Diane Curlee, Clemson Extension Forestry & Wildlife Agent Janet Steele, Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley and Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel. Participants received

hands-on experience doing many PLT activities from the K-8 Explore Your Environment, The Journeys of Black Professionals in Green Careers, and the Teaching with i-Tree activity guides. Many thanks to State Program Leader of 1890 Extension Program Dr. Joshua Idassi for helping to make this training possible for the counselors and ag agents.

## Boy Scouts Receive Forestry Merit Badge

Boy Scouts from around the state earned their forestry merit badges at Harbison State Forest May 20. Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel and Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley led this day-long program for 22 scouts. The BSA Forestry Merit Badge Workshop is offered each spring in partnership with the BSA Scouts of America Indian Water Council.

Scouts prepared a field notebook as they learned about the principles of sustainable forest management first-hand as well as forestry’s many contributions to society and our way of life. Scouts got to use an increment borer to determine the age of a tree and



Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley points out a potential hazard tree next to the Firebreak Connector Trail and asks scouts to identify the remedy.



Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel discusses the importance of soil health and shows a soil sample.

### EDUCATION

—Beth Foley & Matt Schnabel

learn about its growth rate. They learned about basic leaf types and then used SCFC’s “Forest Trees of SC” guide to identify 15 tree species. Scouts also learned about career opportunities and about the education and training required to get a job in forestry.



Teams of four from every school participated in the final event, the Lumberjack Race. Teams have to cut logs with crosscut and bow saws, then carry a log, push it with peaveys through a course and then carry the log back to the finish line in the fastest time.



# Annual Woodland Clinic Held in Greenwood

The annual Woodland Clinic was held April 25 at the Connie Maxwell Oasis Farm in Greenwood. The Woodland Clinic is a forestry contest for high school students with teams competing in compass and pacing, tree measurement, tree and forest pest identification, forestry tools and equipment identification. A lumberjack race wraps up the competition with teams of four competing with a crosscut saw, bow saws, peaveys and log carriers in a race for the fastest completion time.

Retiree Jimmy Walters organizes the annual event and gets assistance from Forestry Commission employees, Clemson Extension personnel and other organizations to staff the event and assist the students.

Congratulations to Saluda High School for winning the overall team competition!



The team from Saluda High School won the Overall Team Competition.



Students identify forestry tools and equipment.



Students at the tree and forest pest identification station.



# 2023 SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour



Teachers at the Log Creek Timber logging site.

Twenty-seven teachers from across the state participated in the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour based out of Aiken. This was our first year holding the tour in this location. The Teachers' Tour is a professional development course designed for educators seeking a hands-on outdoor learning experience. The course gives educators a comprehensive overview of SC's \$23 billion forest industry, looking closely at forestry's economic, environmental and social impact on our state. The following is a short journal of each day's activities and the people and organizations that made the Teachers' Tour possible.

## Monday, June 19

In the morning, teachers visited Wallace and Susan Wood's Pinewood Farm in Plum Branch, saw different forestry measurement tools, and learned how a privately owned farm in the SC Tree Farm program is managed. In the afternoon, we visited ArborGen Taylor Nursery in Trenton, where SCFC seedlings

are grown for SC landowners. Kylie Burdette, Reforestation Advisor, and Austin Hall, Nursery Manager, gave very informative presentations on their extensive nursery operations, a tour of their facility and a delicious dinner.

## Tuesday, June 20

Teachers started off the morning at Collum's Lumber Mill in Allendale. Collum's is owned by the family of former SCFC Commissioner Micky Scott. Jake Scott, Vice President of Operations, gave a tour of the facility, and teachers learned about the operations of a family-owned wholesale lumber and pole

manufacturer. In the afternoon, we visited the Swiss Krono USA Flooring facility in Barnwell, which is a sustainable laminate flooring manufacturer

## EDUCATION

—Matt Schnabel

After the tour, teachers got to speak with CEO Erik Christensen about Swiss Krono's operations and products. Teachers wrapped up the day with a great dinner sponsored by Beach Island Timber at Josh Key's farm.

## Wednesday, June 21

Wednesday brought the teachers to beautiful Hitchcock Woods for our Project Learning Tree (PLT) day! Superintendent Bennett Tucker and Assistant Superintendent Eric Grande taught the teachers about the history, management, and unique environments of the property. SC Forestry Commission Firewise Coastal Field Coordinator



Teachers identify trees during a PLT activity at Hitchcock Woods.



Andy Johnson talked about wildfire prevention and the Firewise program. Ryan Wenzel from Sabine and Waters and Jennie Haskell from the Longleaf Alliance described the longleaf pine ecosystem and how Hitchcock Woods manages for timber production for the protection of their red-cockaded woodpecker population. Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel and Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley trained the teachers on how to use the PLT lessons with their students back at their schools. Teachers received the PLT K-8th and Green Jobs: Exploring Forestry Careers activity guides. The PLT guides were provided by an International Paper Foundation grant from the Georgetown IP mill. In the evening, Matt and Eric led a hike to visit the national champion longleaf pine on Hitchcock Woods...amazing! Lunch that day was sponsored by Sabine and Waters.

## Thursday, June 22

Day four took us to the Sylvamo paper mill in Eastover. First, International Paper foresters Michael Walker, Justin Demiter, and Chase Bettis explained their jobs procuring wood for the mill. Then, Sylvamo engineer Mike Gregory gave an overview of the paper-making process, the products produced, and how they conserve and protect natural resources. After a mill tour from the engineers, we headed to Old Timber Lodge for the sponsors' dinner. There, teachers had a chance to talk to the sponsors of the tour and share what they learned about the forest industry. It was a special evening at a beautiful location.



Teachers and sponsors at the sponsors' dinner.



Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley talks about prescribed fire at Hitchcock Woods.

International Paper sponsored the lunch, and Log Creek Timber and Swiss Kronos USA Flooring sponsored the dinner.

## Friday, June 23

Teachers started out at an active Log Creek Timber logging job where owner Reg Williams and SC Timber Producers Association President Crad Jaynes explained how a harvesting operation works. Teachers got to speak to the loggers and drivers to learn about their jobs. Next, we went to the National Wild Turkey Federation headquarters where Outreach and Education Programs Manager Teresa Carroll explained the history of the organization and its work to promote hunting and to support wild turkey populations habitat. Afterwards, Schnabel led the PLT activity "If You Were the Boss" where teachers role-played forest land managers



Teachers complete an air quality study during a PLT activity.

of a 400-acre public forested property. Finally, Emily Oakman, Forestry Association of SC Director of Landowner Outreach, Forestry Education and Programs, Traclynn Allison, Domtar forester, and Crad Jaynes wrapped up the tour with an overview of forestry in SC and a summary of lessons learned.

Thank you to all our sponsors, hosts, speakers and most of all our teachers for your dedication and work to create our future generation of natural resource conservationists.





SC PLT Facilitators posing by Billy Cate's pond.

## SC PLT Hosts Facilitator Refresher, Triple Facilitator Workshop

SC Project Learning Tree (PLT) Facilitators attended a reunion and refresher either virtually June 27 or in-person at Buckeye Farm June 29. This annual meeting allows facilitators time to network and connect with each other, as well as receive important updates about the state and national PLT program. A PLT curriculum training is included to keep facilitators in the know of PLT's latest and greatest resources. The in-person event is held at a SC Tree Farm so facilitators can learn more about forestry in our state and connect with local landowners.

### EDUCATION

—Beth Foley

This year, facilitators were introduced to the Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers secondary activity guide and The Journeys of Black Professionals in Green Careers electronic resource. Educators participated in two different PLT activities including, “Who Works in This Forest?” and “If You Were the Boss” to learn about the green career sector and how to manage a forest sustainably while serving different needs. Then, educators toured Buckeye Farm and learned how



Participants got to tour the Joe R. Adair Outdoor Education Center's property, which included a historic cabin from the 1800s.

Billy Cate sustainably manages the family property for timber production, recreation, aesthetics, wildlife, and many other environmental benefits. Billy was recognized as the 2015 SC Tree Farmer of the Year by the American Tree Farm program. He also published a book, *The Farm*, describing his family's relationship with the land and the long history of forest conservation on the property.

SC PLT hosted a Triple Facilitator Workshop with Project WET and Project WILD at the Joe R. Adair Outdoor Learning Facility in Laurens July 19-20. Facilitators are leaders in environmental education who are formal and informal educators in South

Carolina and host WILD, WET and PLT workshops for educators in their schools, organizations or for other groups that teach youth about the environment. Twenty-two educators from across the state attended this two-day workshop, which was full of fun hands-on activities. Facilitators learned the nuts and bolts of leading professional development trainings for all three projects and received tons of resources for each program. They also had the opportunity to build their own workshop agendas and lead activities with the group. We are excited to have these new facilitators on board and a part of our SC Project Learning Tree team!



# Harbison Hosts SC State CHOICE Program

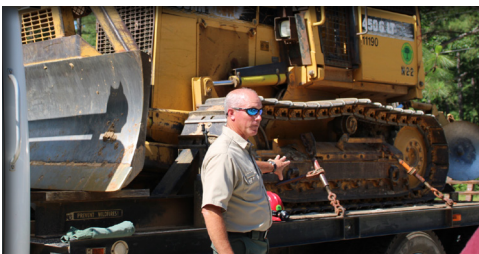


FIA Coordinator Byron Rominger shows students how to use a hypsometer to measure trees in the FIA program.

Harbison State Forest hosted participants of South Carolina State University's CHOICE resident summer camp program June 13 where 20 students learned about jobs in agriculture and natural resource management.

## EDUCATION

—Beth Foley



Fairfield/Newberry Sector Forestry Technician I Phillip Reddick explains how we use dozers to put out fires by removing the fuel.



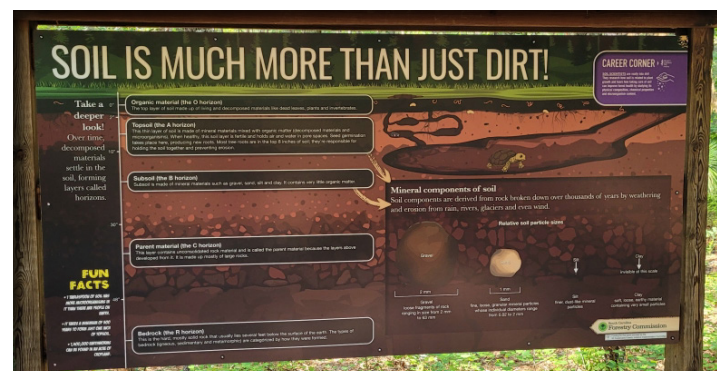
Chief Pilot Sam Anderson shows students how to fly a drone and how we use them in forestry.

The camp focused on raising awareness of job opportunities in conservation, natural resources, sustainability and other agriculture-related areas or science.

Several SCFC employees talked about their jobs and the education or training someone would need for it. Some did a hands-on activity and equipment demonstrations.

# Harbison State Forest Learning Trail Panels are Updated

The Learning Trail educational panels on Harbison State Forest have been updated and look great! Funding for the signs was provided by the SC Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee.





# BY THE NUMBERS

## SC FORESTRY FACTS & FIGURES: FY2022-23

### Forest management

- ▶ 1,887 landowners assisted
- ▶ 915 cost-share, stewardship, and/or woodland exams performed, covering 63,220 acres
- ▶ SCFC personnel conducted 8,179 acres of prescribed burns and 1,307 acres of standbys, plowed 811 miles of firebreaks and installed 113 waterbars.



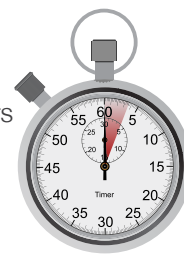
### Fire statistics

- ▶ 1,050 wildfires
- ▶ 6,920 acres burned
- ▶ 591 fires caused by debris burning, the No. 1 cause in SC (56% of all wildfires in SC in FY2022-23)
- ▶ 332,179 burn notifications handled by automated call center
- ▶ 5-year average: 1,368 fires / 9,018 acres burned



### Fire response

- ▶ The Commission's three dispatch centers field more than 22,000 calls every year for notifications and reporting of wildfires
- ▶ The average response time between the report of a wildfire and the arrival of an initial attack warden was 37.84 minutes



### Investment

- ▶ \$124.4 million in forestry capital projects announced in FY2022-23
- ▶ 83 primary mills
- ▶ ~900 secondary mills
- ▶ 48,000+ jobs stemming directly from forest industry  
\* >100,000 total jobs
- ▶ \$2.92 billion in direct labor income



### Ownership

- ▶ 64,000+ forest landowners in SC with 10 or more acres
- ▶ 87% of SC forests are privately owned
- ▶ 52% of private forests are family-owned
- ▶ The average "family forest" is 97 acres. 63% of these owners have their primary residence on the land
- ▶ Forest industries own 463,000 acres, down 58% since 2001
- ▶ Public agencies manage 13% of South Carolina's forests



### Enforcement

- ▶ 46 sworn officers
- ▶ 319 fire investigations
- ▶ 35 fire cases, 10 game and fish cases, 3 violations of state forest regulations and 13 miscellaneous cases
- ▶ \$6,626.16 in fines collected
- ▶ 141 warning tickets issued
- ▶ 14 burn site inspections; 57 smoke management investigations
- ▶ 124 timber theft/fraud cases
- ▶ 47%, or \$324,040.80, of timber theft/fraud losses recovered for victims



### Wood supply

- ▶ 12.82 million acres of forestland, composed of 53% hardwood and 47% softwood
- ▶ SC's forests now contain 27.9 billion cubic feet of wood, more than at any time in the past century
- ▶ There are 2 million more acres of forestland in SC than there were in 1936.
- ▶ The state's forests, both hardwood and softwood, are growing more wood than is being harvested





# Fire Weather Outlook

## SOUTHERN AREA

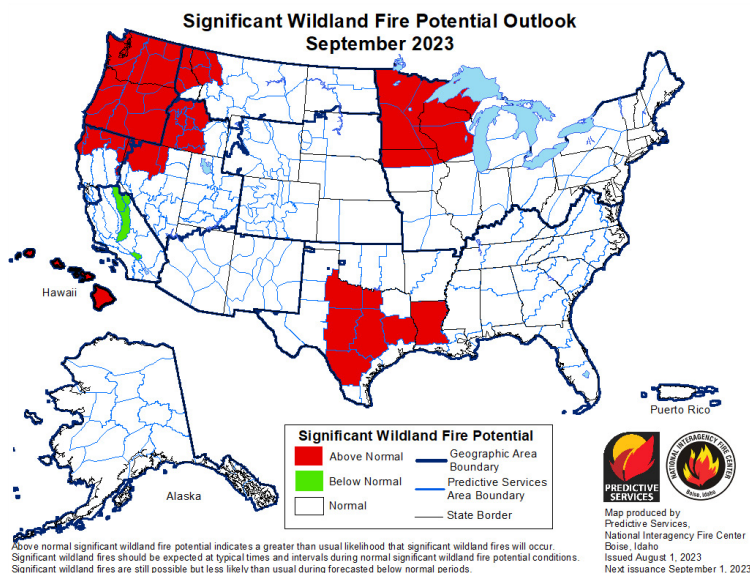
Relentless heat and persistent dryness have led to significant changes to the Southern Area outlook through the end of summer. Flash drought development across Texas that began in June accelerated through July, resulting in increasingly parched conditions across much of the state and into portions of Louisiana and Mississippi. July has also been significantly drier than normal from portions of central Georgia into the interior Carolinas, where spring and early rainfall was mostly near to above normal.

The expansive ridge of high pressure aloft responsible for heat across Texas shows no signs of letting up for at least the next few weeks. This heat dome is expected to occasionally expand across the rest of the southern US into August, resulting in widespread coverage of triple-digit high temperatures over the Southern Area.

Most long-range outlooks favor anomalous heat and drier than normal conditions for the Southern Area's coastal states into September. It is also unclear how Atlantic tropical activity will be affected by these competing influences, which may go on to affect precipitation anywhere in the geographic area. The number of Atlantic tropical cyclones is forecast to be near to below normal in 2023, but this has no bearing on where they may occur.

Areas experiencing a recent dry spell from central Georgia into portions of the interior Carolinas, including the Piedmont and Sandhills, are largely favored to remain drier than normal the next few weeks, while the heat dome will occasionally bring a risk for triple-digit high temperatures. Evaporative demand should be consistently highest across central Georgia, where KBDIs are already well above 500 and should easily surpass 600 on an increasing basis. ERC-Y is forecast to trend to and above the 90th percentile in early August across portions of the highlighted PSAs, while dead fuel moisture will approach critical values, as well. Lightning ignitions may increase heading into August in these areas, while climatology and long-range outlooks favor wetter conditions in the Appalachians and closer to the coast.

Unless wet weather sets in and persists or a tropical cyclone remnant affects the region, there is no reason to believe that this dryness will be alleviated. Otherwise, a normal fall fire season is currently anticipated elsewhere in the Southern Area.



—National Interagency Fire Center

## CURRENT FIRE NUMBERS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

### MONTH AND YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS 5- AND 10-YEAR AVERAGE

Time Period	July		JULY-JULY		FISCAL YEAR	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
5 Year Average	53	322.7	53	322.7	1,253	8,158.1
10 Year Average	71	394.3	71	394.3	1,418	9,839.2
Current FY <sup>1</sup>	35	183.6	35	183.6	35	183.6

<sup>1</sup>To date for current fiscal year



